

PUBLICATION DATES OF EARLY SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS IN VICTORIA

by

HELEN I. ASTON*

ABSTRACT

The *Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science*, the *Philosophical Society of Victoria* and the *Philosophical Institute of Victoria* were all predecessors of the present *Royal Society of Victoria*. Between 1854 and 1860 all three bodies published *Transactions* which included papers by Ferdinand J. H. Mueller (1825–1896) of importance to botanical taxonomy. As the dates of publication of these *Transactions* affect botanical nomenclature evidence concerning such dates is presented here.

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science (Vict.Inst.) was founded in Melbourne in July 1854 and the Philosophical Society of Victoria (Philos.Soc.) held its first general meeting in the same city in August of the same year. These two organisations amalgamated in June–July 1855 to form the Philosophical Institute of Victoria (Philos.Inst.). The amalgamated body retained this name until November 1859 when it was granted the Queen's permission to change its title to "The Royal Society of Victoria".

The two original organisations each published one volume of *Transactions*, including proceedings, of their meetings, while the Philosophical Institute published four such volumes before changing its title. The publication dates of these *Transactions* are important for botanical nomenclature as most of the volumes contain articles by Ferdinand Mueller describing new plant species. Those of the two original organisations are particularly critical as names published in one may need to be placed in synonymy under names published in the other, e.g. *Grevillea miqueliana* in *Trans. Vict. Inst.* 1854–55:132 and *G. victoriae* in *Trans. Philos. Soc.* 1:107. The title pages of these two *Transactions* simply state the year 1855.

To determine dates of publication the original minute books of both the Philosophical Society and the Philosophical Institute, containing minutes of both council and general meetings for the period involved were consulted at the premises of the Royal Society of Victoria. Minutes of the Victorian Institute are not held by the Royal Society or the State Library of Victoria and are probably no longer extant. The unpublished minutes, together with reports of general meetings published in the various *Transactions* provided the basic data. For the critical years of 1854 and 1855, involving items A to C in table 1, the Melbourne daily newspapers *The Age*, *The Argus* and *The Melbourne Morning Herald* were searched for additional data, as also were letters from F. Mueller to W. J. Hooker of Kew Herbarium, London. Sundry chance finds in journals of that period were also helpful. No attempt has been made to conduct exhaustive searches of other publications or correspondence as the extra effort involved seems unlikely to yield any further useful refinement of data.

DATES OF PUBLICATION

Summary

Table 1 summarises information concerning the volume and part numbers and the dates of publication of each, for all *Transactions* under consideration. Page numbers given are for the actual "transactions", i.e. the papers read at meetings, as distinct from the business "proceedings" which have been excluded from the table. Unfortunately it has not been possible to prove conclusively which of the critical items A and C appeared

*National Herbarium of Victoria, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, Victoria 3141.

Muelleria 5(4): 281–288 (1984).

first as the accumulated evidence shows that they were published within a few days of each other or even on the same day. The author's opinion, enlarged upon under "Discussion", is that item C has priority of publication.

Evidence supporting the dates presented in the table is detailed below.

Details

A. TRANSACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE VICTORIAN INSTITUTE, UNNUMBERED VOLUME.

The title page is dated 1855 and states "for the sessions 1854-1855". There is no volume or part number. The undated preface states that "... The collected results [of meetings of the Institute] are now laid before the members; the papers which are read to the Institute are published entire, and an abstract of the Proceedings of the meetings is appended. . . ." It therefore seems that the whole of the *Transactions* were published together at the one time. The date of publication must have been after 7 June 1855, the date of the last meeting of the Victorian Institute, as the account of that meeting appears in the *Transactions*. Although a report of the council presented at a general meeting on 8 March 1855 stated (PM, xv) that papers contributed prior to and including December 1854, the period covered by the council report, "will shortly be published", I have found no evidence of any publication prior to the appearance of the complete volume described here.

The first report of the Council of the Philosophical Institute states (PM2, xxi) that "At the amalgamation of the two societies the funds of each were exhausted in their current expenses, and in the publication of their Transactions." It also states "... at the time of the Union [the Victorian Institute was] perfectly free from debt, . . .". This indicates that the *Trans. Vict. Inst.* had been published and paid for by or about the time of amalgamation, i.e. late June to early July 1855 (the first Council meeting of the joint body was 28 June and the first general meeting 10 July). However, other evidence suggests that publication and/or distribution was not effected until some 8 to 10 weeks after amalgamation. Certainly a letter dated 28 June 1855 from F. Mueller to W. J. Hooker, London, shows that *Trans. Vict. Inst.* was still unpublished then, as Mueller wrote "I am sorry that the years transactions of our scientif. Societies are not yet fully printed, but I have given orders that a copy of the phil [a few obscured letters] transact. shall be transmitted to you, and will send reprints of the bot. articles of the Victorian Institute; both societies are now united". In addition, Mueller's words "will send" instead of "am sending" indicate a future intent and suggest that no preprints or reprints were yet available.

In *The Argus*, Melbourne, 14 September 1855, p. 5, there is a statement that "The transactions and proceedings of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science has been published by Mr. George Robertson, and shows that this society, like the Philosophical, has not been idle." An account of the transactions follows the statement and shows clearly that the publication referred to is that of the Victorian Institute. The transactions were therefore published before, but probably only 1-few days before, 14 September, as *The Argus* was a daily newspaper and normally would not delay long in its reporting. This conclusion is supported by *The Age*, Melbourne, another daily newspaper. On 15 September 1855, p. 5, *The Age* reported "The Victorian Institute. — The transactions and proceedings of this body, for the sessions 1854-55 have been published in a collective form. . . .". The report mentions contents and contributors, and thereby leaves no doubt that it refers to item A.

A publication date very closely preceding 14 September is also inferred by *The Illustrated Melbourne Family News* 1(4):35-36, dated 22 September 1855, where a review of "Transactions and Proceedings of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, for the Sessions 1854-55" is given. The *News* had apparently appeared weekly since its first number dated 1 September* and it is most likely that the transactions reached

**Australian Builder & Land Advertiser* contains advance advertisements for *Illust. Melb. Fam. News* notifying that No. 1 will appear on 1 September; I have seen No. 2 dated 8 September and No. 4 dated 22 September; No. 3 presumably appeared dated 15 September.

Table 1. Summary of all published *Transactions* of the three organisations which preceded the Royal Society of Victoria.

Item	Publication	Volume	Number or Part	Pages	Includes transactions for	Dates of Publication		
						Definite		Probable
						After	Before	
A	Trans. Vict. Inst.	Unnumbered	Unnumbered	1-167	June 1854-June 1855	7 June 1955	14 Sept. 1855	Apparently after 8 Sept.; possibly on 10 Sept.
B	Trans. Philos. Soc. Vict.	1	No. 1	1-33	Aug. & Sept. 1854	18 Sept. 1854	22 Nov. 1854	Probably before the end of Sept.; almost certainly before 8 Nov.
C	" "	1 Complete		1-265 (1-33 repeat 1855 1-33 of item B)	Aug. 1854 to July 1855	6 Sept. 1855	13 Sept. 1855	Apparently on 10 Sept.; believed to precede item A
D	Trans. Philos. Inst. Vict.				Aug. to Dec. 1855	Publication suggested but not effected		
E	" "	1		1-158	Aug. 1855 to Dec. 1856	8 May 1857	3 June 1857	Apparently distributed 3 June
F	" "	2	Pt 1	1-92	Jan to Aug. 1857	23 Sept. 1857	30 Sept. 1857	Apparently distributed 30 Sept.
G	" "	2	Pt 2	93-176 (excluding pp. 131-134)*	Sept. to Dec. 1857	5 May 1858	26 May 1858	Apparently distributed 26 May
H	" "	3		1-120	Jan. to Dec. 1858	23 June 1859	13 July 1859	Apparently distributed 13 July
I	" "	4	Pt 1	1-98	Jan. to Aug. 1859	30 Nov. 1859	21 Dec. 1859	Apparently distributed 21 Dec.
J	" "	4	Pt 2	99-210	Sept. to Dec. 1859	4 June 1860	25 June 1860	Apparently distributed 25 June

*pp. 131-134 were expunged from the volume. See p. 13 of Pescott, R.T.M., *The Royal Society of Victoria from then 1854, to now, 1959, Proc. Roy. Soc. Vict.* 73:1-40 (1961).

that periodical after their issue of 8 September and too late for the deadline for copy for the 15 September issue. If the transactions had been received long-prior to 15 September it is unlikely that the review of them would have been held over until the fourth number of 22 September, particularly as the review commences "The valuable volume before us . . ." and is most eulogistic of both the publication and the Institute.

Available evidence, although inconclusive, tends to indicate that distribution of this volume postdates that of the complete volume one (item C) of *Trans. Philos. Soc. Vict.* See under "Discussion".

B. TRANSACTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA, VOL. 1, NO. 1.

There are apparently few copies of this number surviving today. Its existence seems to have been overlooked previously but is indicated in the proceedings of the meeting of 10 July 1855 (PM1, xxv) where "The Honorary Secretary . . . intimated . . . that the Linnaean Society, of London, to which a copy of the first number of the Philosophical Society's transactions had been sent, acknowledged the receipt of same . . .". Verification is provided in the "Catalogue of the Library of the Linnean Society" (S1) where "Victoria:- Transactions of the Philosophical Society. Vol. 1. No. 1. *Melbourne*, 1854. 8 vo." is listed with Dr. F. Mueller as the donor. I have examined an original copy of this number owned by T. Darragh, Melbourne. It has a heavy paper cover which is clearly marked as Vol. 1. No. 1. and as the *Transactions* "for the months of August and September, 1854". Contents include pages 1-33 of transactions, set exactly as found in complete volumes (item C, see below) but with the reverse of page 33 left blank. Proceedings covering the meetings of 12 August and 10 and 18 September 1854, are also included, so that publication of this number must have been after 18 September 1854.

An estimate from James J. Blundell & Co. for the publication of the *Transactions* "to be published this month" was approved by Council on 5 September 1854 (CM1). From this, and from the speed of publication in the era concerned, it is probable that the number appeared before the end of September. It was almost certainly published by 8 November, as it was then resolved by Council (CM1) that "members taking twenty copies of the *Transactions* of the Society and upwards should obtain the same at cost price." On 22 November 1854 (CM1) bills passed for payment by Council included one to Blundell & Co. for "Publication of *Transactions*," showing that Vol. 1. No. 1. must have been published by that date.

The back cover of the original copy of Vol. 1. No. 1. bears a note that "No. 2. will be published on the 1st of January, 1855." I can find no evidence of a No. 2. ever appearing.

C. TRANSACTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA, VOL. 1 COMPLETE.

In the Melbourne daily newspaper *The Melbourne Morning Herald*, for 20 April 1855, p. 2. there is a detailed advertisement by James J. Blundell & Co., the publishers, which reads "Transactions of the Philosophical Society of Victoria, for the year ending in July, 1855, will be published in four numbers, making one volume . . . Persons desirous of becoming regular subscribers . . . are requested to send in their names . . . on or before the 1st of June, 1855 . . ." Of the papers listed for inclusion three had already been published previously in the vol. 1, no. 1. of 1854 (item B above) and would therefore be reprinted in the proposed new, four-part volume.

The Blundell advertisement continued to be published daily in the same newspaper until about mid-May. It indicates a clear intention as at April/May 1855 to publish volume one of the *Transactions* in four separate numbers. However, I have found no evidence of publication of this volume in parts after this date, but only of publication of the whole volume complete in one issue.

An original copy of the complete volume of *Transactions* is in the library of the Royal Society of Victoria. It has the original stiff paper (or light card) cover intact, and this is clearly printed "Vol. 1", without any number, and "for the past year, ending in July, 1855." An introductory note, dated September 1855, states that the volume contains papers read from the Society's ". . . inauguration in August, 1854, to its amalgamation with the Victorian Institute . . .". The included transactions consist of pp. 1-265, pages

1–33 being an exact repeat of those pages in Vol. 1. No. 1 (1854), while p. 34 occupies the reverse of p. 33 and subsequent pages follow on. This issue is therefore a complete volume which reprints the transactions and proceedings of No. 1 (1854) and also adds those from subsequent meetings up to July 1855.

On 10 May 1855, while the Blundell advertisement cited above was still running, *The Melbourne Morning Herald* (p. 6) also published a detailed account of the meeting of “The Melbourne Philosophical Society” held on 8 May. From the account it is obvious that the meeting was that of the Philosophical Society of Victoria. At the meeting the secretary, Mr. Wekey, was queried about the publication of the society’s transactions. He replied “. . . that several of the papers are already in type, but that they would not be printed off before the first of June next, being the time up to which subscribers’ names will be received . . .” This reply confirms the imminence of publication indicated by the advertisement but makes no mention of publication in parts.

In *The Argus*, for 7 August 1855, p. 7, James J. Blundell & Co. announced that “The First Volume of “Transactions of the Philosophical Society” will leave the press in a few days. It will contain, the papers and proceedings of the Society for the year ending July, 1855 . . . Subscribers’ names will be received till . . . the 15th inst., by the publishers . . .” The date for the receipt of subscriptions therefore had been extended beyond the date given in the original Blundell advertisement and the complete Vol. 1. would not have been published until after subscriptions closed on 15 August 1855. The paragraphs below show that publication was delayed until September.

On 6 September 1855 (CM2) “A letter from L. Becker Esq. was read . . . requesting that his two papers on “viviparous” fishes to be read at the next monthly meeting of the Philosophical Institute, be printed in the first volume of the Transactions of the Philosophical Society . . . [Council decided that] as the paper had not been read as yet, it could not be published in the forthcoming volume of the Transactions of the Philosophical Society.” The complete Vol. 1. was therefore not yet published by 6 September 1855 but was apparently very close to being published, thus prompting Becker’s request. Although his papers were read at a monthly meeting of the Philosophical Institute on the following day (PM2, xiv) their publication was still held over, thus reinforcing the above suggestion that publication of the complete volume was very soon after 6 September 1855.

The *Australian Builder and Land Advertiser*, No. 7, 13 September 1855, p. 57, states that “When about going to press we received a volume of the first published *Transactions of the Philosophical Society*, being a series of papers contributed by its members. . . .” Although a list of contents is not given, the nature of the comments which follow this statement indicates that the volume referred to is the complete volume one. As the previous issue of *Aust. Builder & Land Advert.*, No. 6, is dated 6 September, that periodical must have received its copy of the transactions between 6 and 13 September 1855, and probably only one or two days before the thirteenth.

The published minutes (PM2, xvi) of the general meeting of the Philosophical Institute for 28 November 1855 show that copies of *Trans. Philos. Soc.* had been widely circulated prior to that date. The volume number is not specified in the minutes but it is obvious from the timing and from reference to the transactions not having been published at the cost of the Philosophical Society (see footnote*) that the issue concerned is the complete volume one.

*Although publication and distribution was effected in September 1855 additional copies continued to be bound and distributed well into 1856. Both the delays prior to September 1855 and the drawn-out completion period were due to financial difficulties. This is indicated by the first report of the Council of the Philosophical Institute which states (PM2, xxi) that “At the amalgamation of the two societies . . . all the available funds of the Philosophical Society had been expended in the publication of their Transactions for 1854, and it was therefore attempted, by a private arrangement, . . . to publish Transactions [of the Philosophical Society] for 1855.” Mr. Wekey, a secretary of the Philosophical Society had undertaken “the responsibility of publishing them by private subscription” (see newspaper entries by J. J. Blundell & Co. above) but had “incurred a debt” (PM2, xvi) which the Philosophical Institute adopted at its meeting on 28 November 1855 (l.c.). The minutes of council meetings of the Philosophical Institute for 29 March and 2 April 1856 record correspondence between Mr. Wekey and the Institute concerning the reprinting of portions out of print and the binding of further copies. Council minutes of 7 May 1856 report the receipt of 134 copies from the binders and those of 7 June 1856 report the tabling of a memorandum showing the distribution of eleven copies.

Available evidence, although inconclusive, tends to indicate that this volume was distributed prior to the *Trans. Vict. Inst.* (item A). See under "Discussion".

D. TRANSACTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTE OF VICTORIA. AUG.-DEC. 1855

On 19 March 1856 (PM2, xxiii) it was moved "That . . . it is desirable that the Transactions for the period ending December 31st, 1855, be printed and published as soon as possible." This would refer only to the Transactions of the amalgamated body from August to December 1855, those of the two original organisations covering the first seven months of the year having already been published. I have found no evidence of this motion having been effected. To the contrary, on 10 September 1856 (CM2) at a special Council meeting called to consider "taking immediate measures for the publication of the Transactions" the secretary was "instructed to collect the papers which have been read before the Philosophical Institute since the amalgamation of the two Societies . . .". It therefore appears that no transactions of the Philosophical Institute had been published prior to 10 September 1856. Subsequent minutes (CM2) for 7 October, 14 October, 13 November 1856 and 6 January, 30 January 1857 indicate the steps taken in collecting and processing the papers until on 8 May 1857 a proof copy was presented to Council for instructions (see item E).

E. TRANSACTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTE OF VICTORIA. VOL. 1.

On 6 May 1857 (PM3, xxxii) "The Honorary Secretary intimated that the "Transactions" of the Institute, for 1856, were printed, and that he only waited for final instructions from the Council to publish the same, in order that copies might be distributed to the members." On 8 May 1857 (CM2) the secretary submitted to Council "a proof copy of the "Transactions" and . . . [obtained] . . . final Instructions for Publication." On 3 June 1857 (PM3, xxxv) the secretary ". . . intimated that the "Transactions" of the Institute for 1856 had been published, and that copies were upon the table for distribution to . . . members . . .". Although these quotations refer to transactions "for 1856" the publication concerned also included transactions from August to December 1855. (See item D.)

F-J. TRANSACTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTE OF VICTORIA. VOLS. 2-4.

All information has been obtained from original copies with original covers held by either the Royal Society of Victoria or the National Museum of Victoria. Dates of publication determined from:

- F. 30 September 1857 (PM3, xliii) "The Secretary announced the publication of Part I, of Volume II., of the "Transactions of the Institute", . . .". The last page of this part is dated 23 September 1857.
- G. 26 May 1858 (PM4, viii) "The Secretary announced the publication of Part II., Vol. II., of the Transactions of the Institute for 1857, and the members present were supplied with copies of the same." The previous ordinary meeting was on 5 May, and as no announcement was made then Part II was apparently not published by that date.
- H. 13 July 1859 (PM5, xvi) "The Secretary laid upon the table the third volume of the "Transactions of the Institute for 1859" [1859 is an error], and accounted for the delay in the publication of the same . . .". The previous meeting was 23 June 1859.
- I. 21 Dec. 1859 (PM5, xxxiv) "The Secretary intimated that Part 1., Vol. IV., for 1859, was ready for distribution among the members present." The previous meeting was 30 November 1859.
- J. 25 June 1860 (PM6, xi) "Dr. Macadam intimated that Part II. of Vol. IV was ready for distribution among the members." The previous meeting was 4 June 1860.

DISCUSSION

Evidence presented under items A and C shows that these two publications appeared within a few days of each other, or perhaps even on the same day. A quote from *The Herald*, Melbourne, for 10 September 1855, given and discussed below, states that one of the two volumes (which one is uncertain) was to be published that day. The present author's opinion is that the one to be published was that of *Trans. Philos. Soc. Vict.*, vol. 1 complete (item C), and that this preceded the appearance of item A, *Trans. Vict. Inst.* The former volume was reviewed on 13 September, the latter not until 14, 15 and 22 September, the first three reviews mentioned all being in daily newspapers which normally reported scientific events swiftly. In addition *The Argus* report of 14 September which announced publication of item A, q.v., perhaps infers that item C had appeared previously. However, the report (PM2, xxi, quoted under item A) which contrastingly infers that the Victorian Institute had already published its transactions by June/July 1855 is puzzling. If the inference is correct then the Institute must have delayed the sending of copies for review for about three months. Such a delay is unlikely as the newspapers were generous in their reporting of Institute activities and thereby provided good publicity. Certainly Mueller's letter (see under item A) clearly shows that *Trans. Vict. Inst.* was unpublished at 28 June 1855.

It should be noted that the uncertainty over priority of publication just discussed does not affect pages 1–33 of volume one of *Trans. Philos. Soc. Vict.* but only subsequent pages. Pages 1–33 were initially published in 1854 (item B).

The ambiguous announcement in *The Herald* (10 September 1855, p. 6) referred to above states "Proceedings of the Philosophical Institute. — We are glad . . . to announce that this volume, which has been some time in preparation, will be published to-day. . . ." No details of contents are given and therefore it is not possible to be certain which publication the announcement refers to. Although the Philosophical Institute is cited the date precludes the publication from being one produced by that amalgamated body. Instead, when considered in relation to other dated evidence given under item C (and bearing in mind that 8th and 9th September were a Saturday and Sunday) the date of *The Herald* announcement and the word "Philosophical" suggests that the work to be published that day was volume one (complete) of the transactions of the earlier Philosophical Society. This suggestion is reinforced by the allusion to the work having been "some time in preparation", a statement consistent with the delay documented by earlier extracts quoted under item C. The alternative suggestion that the work was the transactions of the *Victorian Institute* (item A) gains some credence when the words of the newspaper announcement are compared with those of an introductory, full-page notice titled "Advertisement" published at the commencement of the *Victorian Institute* transactions. Both the announcement and the advertisement refer, in respective order but in different words, to the varied nature of the papers, the expertness of their authors, the contribution of the papers towards furtherance of Victorian development, the popular style of writing and the hope of sales to the general public. *The Herald* announcement appears to be simply a rephrased copy of the advertisement published with the transactions themselves.

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REFERENCES

CM1 Minutes of Council Meetings of the Philosophical Society of Victoria (Unpublished. Held by the Royal Society of Victoria).

- CM2 Minutes of Council Meetings of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria (Unpublished. Held by the Royal Society of Victoria).
- PM *Trans. Vict. Inst. Proceedings.*
- PM1 *Trans. Philos. Soc. Vict.* Volume 1. Proceedings.
- PM2 *Trans. Philos. Inst. Vict.* Volume 1. Proceedings.
- PM3 *Trans. Philos. Inst. Vict.* Volume 2. Proceedings.
- PM4 *Trans. Philos. Inst. Vict.* Volume 3. Proceedings.
- PM5 *Trans. Philos. Inst. Vict.* Volume 4. Proceedings.
- PM6 *Trans. Roy. Soc. Vict.* Volume 5. Proceedings.
- S1 *Trans. Linn. Soc. London* 21:326 (1855).

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